

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

#### **BORDER LIAISON OFFICES: OUTREACH TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

To achieve the public outreach and involvement objectives of the Border XXI Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established border liaison offices to provide environmental information to local communities and governments, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and border residents. Outreach specialists in each office are available to answer questions, obtain responses, and provide a number of other types of outreach services and resources to border stakeholders.

There are two EPA border liaison offices, one in San Diego, California and one in El Paso, Texas. The San Diego Border Office (SDBO) is staffed by a director, two outreach specialists, an environmental justice specialist, and a tribal liaison. The El Paso Border Office (EPBO) staff consists of a director and three outreach specialists. Staff members from the EPBO also staff a "satellite" office in Brownsville, Texas, once a month.

Some of the services provided by the SDBO and EPBO are described below.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTERS** The border offices have established public information centers to facilitate access to environmental information for border communities. The centers provide information about the Border XXI Program, environmental and technical reports, border newspaper archives, English translations of Mexican environmental laws, and information about U.S. environmental laws and regulations and environmental grant opportunities. The public information centers also have public computer workstations with Internet access. In addition, Border XXI documents have been supplied to more than 60 repositories located in communities throughout the border region.

**PUBLIC MEETINGS** The EPBO and SDBO have hosted more than 50 open houses since the inception of the Border XXI Program. For some open houses, a speaker from the community has addressed an individual topic and participated in a discussion with the audience. At other open houses, the progress of the Border XXI workgroups is discussed, and feedback is solicited from border stakeholders on workgroup projects and other Border XXI activities. The open house events serve as a means for border communities to learn more about a particular border environmental issue and for EPA staff to gain a better understanding of the concerns and desires of the community.

In addition, the SDBO has conducted four grant-writing workshops, which notify communities of EPA environmental grant opportunities and provide training to community members to better prepare them to complete the EPA grant application process.

Border office staff members frequently speak at environmental conferences and meetings of community groups on a broad range of environmental topics, as well as on the Border XXI Program.

**BORDER XXI FACT SHEETS** To provide readily accessible information on the Border XXI Program, public information fact sheets in English and Spanish have been developed and distributed. In addition to providing details about the goals, structure, and activities of each of the nine workgroups, fact sheets are available on the following topics: (1) Border XXI Program overview; (2) the EPA border liaison offices; (3) the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADB); and (4) the Geographic Information Sys-

tem (GIS) Subworkgroup. Each of the fact sheets provides an overview of the topic, a brief description of how the topic is related to the Border XXI Program, and names and telephone numbers of contacts in both the United States and Mexico. The fact sheets are available from both border offices and on the Border XXI Program web site at [www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder](http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder).

#### **BORDER XXI VIDEO**

Through a cooperative agreement with ARTScorpsLA, a 50-minute bilingual education video has been developed to provide an overview of the Border XXI Program and some of the key issues confronting border communities. The video is an interlocking series of vignettes; each emphasizes important themes and ideas through pictures, text, and individual voices. The video has been distributed to border libraries, Border XXI repositories, public access television stations, and other organizations along the border. The public can contact the border offices at 800-334-0741 for more information and a copy of the video.

#### **OUTREACH ON SPECIFIC ISSUES**

The SDBO has participated with other EPA and International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) staff to provide opportunities for the local community to dialogue with representatives from the two federal entities, as well as from the City of San Diego, and to receive progress reports regarding the planning, design, and construction of the San Diego International Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) and the outfall. These collaborative efforts have included: (1) convening public monthly meetings since 1995; (2) publishing and distributing bilingual fact sheets; (3) publishing and distributing a draft and a final environmental impact reports; and (4) presenting information on the IWTP to local city and county officials.

The EPBO is involved in a number of activities related to air quality management in the Paso del Norte air basin, an area comprising Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; El Paso, Texas; and Doña Ana County, New Mexico. The EPBO also has been a participant in the Paso del Norte Clean Air Partnership, a multi-stakeholder group that organizes community air quality awareness programs. The group established the first binational Ozone Action Day Program, which provides timely information to the community about the potential impacts of ozone pollution and encourages Paso del Norte residents to protect themselves from ozone exposure and to take actions to reduce pollution. The Paso del Norte Ozone Map, developed under a cooperative agreement between the EPA and Austin College, and produced daily by the University of Texas, El Paso, is an important public education tool as part of the Ozone Action Day Program. The EPA has also supported development of bilingual Internet web sites for the Paso del Norte Ozone Map ([www.ozonemap.org](http://www.ozonemap.org)) and Clean Air Partnership web site ([www.bordercleanair.org](http://www.bordercleanair.org)).

In addition, the EPBO has been involved with the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for the Improvement of Air Quality in the Paso del Norte Air Basin. The JAC was established through Appendix I of Annex V to the La Paz Agreement as an advisory committee to the Border XXI Air Work Group to recommend actions to manage air quality in the binational region. The EPBO played a coordination role in the development of the JAC's strategic plan. The plan documents 26 priority projects identified from the more than 100 initially proposed to improve air quality in the Paso del Norte region. For more details on the JAC, please refer to the Air Workgroup chapter in this report.

#### **OUTREACH TO INDUSTRY**

The EPA border liaison offices have conducted several outreach activities to industry in the border region. More specifically, the border liaison offices have:

- Provided Border XXI Program information to border industries and industry associations, through mass mailings, public meetings, listservs, meetings with industry representatives, and booths at seminars and conferences.

- Assisted in the coordination of seminars and workshops.
- Participated in industry seminars and workshops offered by the EPA and Mexico's Secretaría del Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales, y Pesca (SEMARNAP, or Secretariat of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries).
- Coordinated and participated in environmental education activities with the industry sector.
- Provided presentations to industry groups and organizations.

In addition to these specific activities, the EPA border liaison offices are available to respond to general questions and requests for assistance, as needed. Details about additional activities related to industry outreach can be found in the Pollution Prevention Workgroup chapter in this report.